

Message Text

SECRET

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45/42

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-15 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 NSCE-00 USSS-00

DRC-01 USIE-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-15 ACDA-19 EUR-25

OMB-01 INRE-00 (ISO) W

----- 046480

O 081317Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4626

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

USINT CAIRO

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

DIA

USCINCEUR

S E C R E T BEIRUT 11911

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT---PARA 3)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, LE, IS

SUBJECT: LEBANESE INVOLVEMENT IN HOSTILITIES

SUMMARY: AS RESULT OF ISRAELI COMPLAINTS AT OCT 6
ILMAC MEETING AND THOSE RELAYED VIA THIS EMBASSY
(BEIRUT 11896), GOL REQUESTED ILMAC MTG EVENING
OCT 7. AMBASSADOR INFORMED OF RESULTS OF MTG MORNING
OCT 8. LEBANESE DID BEST TO SATISFY ISRAELIS AND SAY
THAT ISRAELI ATTITUDE AT MEETING WAS MODERATE WHEREAS
IT HAD BEEN VERY AGGRESSIVE ON OCT 6. LEBANESE PRIMIN
HAS RECEIVED ASSURANCES FROM 'ARAFAT THAT HIS FEDAYEEN
WILL NOT ACT AGAINST ISRAEL FROM LEBANON. END SUMMARY.

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1. LEBANESE DECIDED TAKE INITIATIVE IN CALLING ILMAC MEETING EVENING OCT 7 TO REPLY TO ISRAELI COMPLAINTS RE: (A) FACILITATIVE ASSISTANCE TO SYRIAN AIRCRAFT; (B) USE OF LEBANESE RADAR; AND (C) FEDAYEEN ACTIVITY. MORNING OF OCT 8 AMBASSADOR WAS INFORMED OF RESULTS MEETING, AT REQUEST OF LEBANESE PRIMIN, BY DIRECTOR OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS. EMBOFF GIVEN ESSENTIALLY SAME INFO BY SENIOR LEBANESE ARMY OFFICER.

2. CONCERNING SYRIAN AIRCRAFT, LEBANESE REPORTEDLY ASSURED ISRAELIS THAT IT WAS ISOLATED INCIDENT AS RESULT OF SINGLE PILOT WHO HAD LOST WAY IN HEAVY CLOUDCOVER OCT 6. (COMMENT: IT WAS CLOUDY THAT DAY ON GOLAN AND IN LEBANON.)

3. CONCERNING RADAR LEBANESE TOLD ISRAELIS THAT THERE NO QUESTION OF THEIR TRANSMITTING RADAR INFO TO SYRIANS, PARTICULARLY SINCE BIG RADAR AT JABAL BAROUK OUT OF ORDER FOR ALMOST FIVE MONTHS AWAITING SPARE PARTS FROM FRANCE, AND SMALLER ARMY RADAR ALSO OUT OF ORDER FOR SAME REASON. ONLY OPERABLE RADAR IS THAT COVERING CIVILIAN TRAFFIC AT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT.

4. CONCERNING FEDAYEEN, LEBANESE TOLD ISRAELIS THAT WHILE THEY TRYING PREVENT FEDAYEEN FROM CREATING ANY TROUBLE, AND HAVE RECEIVED SOME ASSURANCES FROM FEDAYEEN LEADERS, THE LEBANESE ARMY NOT STRONG ENOUGH (PARTICULARLY IN SOUTH) AND FEDAYEEN DISCIPLINE NOT GOOD ENOUGH TO PREVENT ANY AND ALL ACTS. GOL WOULD DO ITS BEST BUT EVEN IDF NOT ALWAYS SUCCESSFUL IN PREVENTING FEDAYEEN ACTS.

5. LEBANESE HAD IMPRESSION THAT ISRAELIS PLEASED BY FACT THEY INITIATED CALL FOR MTG AND BY WHAT WAS SAID, EVEN THOUGH IT NOT OF MUCH IMPORTANCE IN RELATION TO BIG BATTLE PRESENTLY UNDERWAY. WHEREAS ISRAELIS HAD BEEN ANGRY AND VERY NEGATIVE EVENING OCT 6, THEY RATHER PLEASANT AND POSITIVE EVENING OCT 7.

6. AMBASSADOR WAS ALSO TOLD BY DIRECTOR OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS THAT PRIME MINISTER SOLH HAD CONVOKED 'ARAFAT ON OCT 7 AND TAKEN VERY TOUGH LINE WITH HIM. 'ARAFAT
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HAD PROMISED THAT HE WOULD ORDER HIS MEN NOT RPT NOT TO UNDERTAKE ANY ACTION VS ISRAEL FROM LEBANON. HE SAID THAT ANY FATAH MEMBER CAUGHT DISOBEYING ORDER WOULD BE SHOT ON SPOT. HOWEVER, HE ALSO TOOK STANDARD (AND ACCURATE) LINE THAT HE NOT IN FULL CONTROL OF ALL FEDAYEEN AND COULD NOT GUARANTEE THERE WOULD BE NO INCIDENTS.

7. LEBANESE ARMY OFFICER TOLD EMBOFF THAT SUDDENLY LATE

OCT 6 BOTH 'ARAFAT (FOR FATAH) AND ZOHEIR MOHSEN (FOR SA'IQA) HAD RECEIVED WORD FROM DAMASCUS THAT SARG WANTED THEM INITIATE ACTION AGAINST ISRAEL FROM LEBANON. FATAH ALREADY VERY RESTIVE UNDER ORDERS NOT TO MOVE AND 'ARAFAT AND HIS DEPUTY ABU ZAIM HAD PREVIOUSLY TOLD LEBANESE ARMY THEY AFRAID INACTIVITY WOULD DAMAGE THEIR POSITIONS AT TIME WHEN THEY LOCKED IN STRUGGLE WITH SA'IQA AND SOME EXTREMIST FATAH ELEMENTS. UPON RECEIPT OF MESSAGES FROM SARG, 'ARAFAT AND MOHSEN ORDER THEIR UNITS TO UNDERTAKE ACTION. ('ARAFAT SAW SOLH AFTER RPT AFTER ISSUING THIS ORDER.) WHEN ABU ZAIM AND MOHSEN REQUESTED PERMISSION MOVE ARMED ELEMNTS TO SOUTH, PERMISSION WAS REFUSED. ANY FEDAYEEN CAUGHT TRAVELLING ARMED ARE DISARMED AND SENT BACK NORTH. NEVERTHELESS, LEBANESE OFFICER ADMITTED THAT SOME FATAH AND SA'IQA HAD SUCCEEDED IN GETTING TO NABATIYEH UNARMED AND IN CIVILIAN CLOTHES. HOWEVER, LEBANESE JUDGE THAT NEITHER FATAH NOR SA'IQA REALLY EAGER TO FIGHT AND THEREFORE WOULD LIMIT ANY ACTION TO USUAL PRACTICE OF FIRING TIME-FUSSED ROCKETS OR MORTAR SHELLS IN GENERAL DIRECTION OF ISRAEL WHILE LOUDLY PROCLAIMING TO PRESS AND OVER RADIO MAGNITUDE OF THEIR ACTIONS. INTER ALIA, 'ARAFAT STILL MOST UNCERTAIN OF WHERE HE STANDS WITH SYRIANS (AND EGYPTIAN AND JORDANIANS) AND DOES NOT WANT RISK ANY LOSS. (COMMENT: THIS MAY BE WHY HE ACCEDED AT LEAST VERBALLY TO REQUEST OF LEBANESE PRIME MIN.)

8. DURING AFTERNOON AND EVENING OF OCT 7 THE LEBANESE ARMY REPORTS THERE WERE A FEW ROCKETS AND MORTAR ROUNDS FIRED IN GENERAL DIRECTION OF ISRAEL, BOTH FROM ARKUB AND IN CENTRAL SECTOR NEAR YAROUN. HOWEVER, SOME OF SHOTS ACTUALLY FELL INSIDE LEBANESE TERRITORY, AND SO

FARAS LEBANESE AWARE, NONEDID DAMAGE TO ANY TARGETS
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IN ISRAEL. FEDAYEEN HAVE NEVERTHELESS BEEN CLAIMING GREAT EXPLOITS, INCLUDING CREDIT FOR SHOOTING DOWN TWO ISRAELI AIRCRAFT (WHICH WERE APPARENTLY HIT BY SYRIAN MISSILES OVER GOLAN AND FELL INSIDE LEBANON).

9. SENIOR LEBANESE ARMY OFFICER TOLD EMBOFF THAT ARMY STILL VERY WEAK IN SOUTH LEBANON WITH MOST STRENGTH CONCENTRATED NEAR BEIRUT SHOULD FEDAYEEN/LEFTISTS/EXTREMIST SUNNIS START TROUBLE EITHER BECUASE OF ARAB VICTORY OR ARAB DEFEAT. HE SAID THAT INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION HAS PRIORITY OVER CONTROL OF FEDAYEEN BUT ARMY WILL DO ITS BEST UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES.

10. COMMENT: WE UNABLE DETERMINE AT THIS TIME WHETHER OR NOT 'ARAFAT'S REPORTED ASSURANCES TO PRIMIN SOLH WILL

BE RELAYED TO FATAH FIELD COMMANDS. NOR CAN WE BE CERTAIN THAT FEDAYEEN WILL BE AS PRUDENT AS LEBANESE ARMY HOPES, ALTHOUGH 'ARAFAT APPEARS GENUINELY WORRIED OVER HIS POSITION AS FATAH CHIEF IN LIGHT OF SYRIAN OPPOSITION AND FACT SYRIANS NEVER CONSULTED OR INFORMED HIM OF OCT 6 ATTACK.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PFOR
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 OCT 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973BEIRUT11911
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: RR
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731044/aaaabgnj.tel
Line Count: 176
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 OCT 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09-Oct-2001 by smithrj>; APPROVED <10-Dec-2001 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: LEBANESE INVOLVEMENT IN HOSTILITIES
TAGS: MARR, LE, IS
To: SECSTATE WASHDC AMMAN JERUSALEM JIDDA KUWAIT TEL AVIV CAIRO USUN NEW YORK
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005